

Minutes of DAAC Meeting

Attendance

DAAC members present were: Seren Derin (SD), Chair; Irene Barrelet (IB), Clerk; Gerry Weiss; and Joan Swift (JS); Dana Goddard (DG); and Nathaniel Malloy, DAAC staff liaison.

Others present were: Tory Dixon

Absent: Joe Tringali (JT), Vice-chair; Jim MacRostie (JM)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Derin called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

MINUTES

Minutes from the December 14, 2010 were reviewed and approved unanimously (5-0) (GW moved, JS second) as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

UMass Fine Arts Center

Mr. Lew Lorraine, who is currently the Director of Operations at the Fine Arts Center (FAC) and who has worked there for 30 years, gave a brief presentation of the accessibility improvements to the facility, and identified problematic areas. The FAC was built prior to the adoption of the ADA Act and because of the construction method and material, is difficult to update. However, there are now 17 accessible seats in Section 2 and 3, there is adequate HP parking, the theatre provides listening devices and large-print brochures, and there is an elevator at the south entrance. The staff at the FAC is trained to assist those need help and are available to take concession orders. Mr. Lorraine identified the following areas which could be improved:

- The box office, as the first point of contact, is not accessible from the elevator, the glass doors are extremely heavy and difficult to open; however the counter is accessible.
- The box office and the theatre are not connected via an accessible route—one must go outside to go between these spaces.
- The south lobby is not connected to the main lobby and box office.

The DAAC had the following concerns and recommendations:

- Given that the glass doors are heavy (too heavy for electronic openers), could UMass provide an extra usher(s) to open the doors—currently, a guest needs to request that an usher open the door.
- The HP parking is poorly lit and there are no clear lines indicating the spaces and unloading aisles. Mr. Lorraine explained that the brick pattern is the dimension of a parking space, and that as a multi-use plaza, painting lines on the ground is not preferred. The Committee encouraged that the parking space be more clearly delineated (perhaps with temporary signs), and that one or two spots be reserved for vans only.

- The Committee also recommended that the directional signs be improved to help visitors find the HP parking—because it is a multi-use plaza, it is difficult to know which way to go.
- The Committee recommended that the brochures and informational material include a message letting visitors know that the ushers will take concession orders and open doors.
- The Committee recommended that the brochures and informational material include a message explaining that a visitor can request the lower price for an accessible seat even if it is in a different section of the theater.
- The FAC's webpage could be updated with this new information, as well as a circulation diagram and map of the parking areas.
- The Committee agreed that there needs to be a direct, accessible route linking the box office with the theater; the current alternative of going back outside is unacceptable.

Other

Comfort Station at Community Field

Town staff presented a conceptual plan showing accessibility improvements and expansion of the ramp, walkway and HP parking spaces for the comfort station at Community Field. The project is expected to be funded as a barrier removal project with CDBG funds, and coincides with the renovation of the comfort station to make it fully accessible.

The Committee agreed that Community Field, with its location in the Town Center and adjacent to the regional high school, is a destination for citizens who use the park, equipment and playground, and that those amenities should be accessible. The DAAC voted unanimously (5-0) (GW moved, IB second) to recommend the improvements to the circulation paths and parking to the Community Development Committee for CDBG funding, as it will remove physical barriers that currently make the playground and park inaccessible to many residents of the community.

UMass AAB Variance Application

Town staff described a variance application submitted by UMass, requesting that the campus center ballroom and student center stage share a portable lift, rather than constructing permanent ramps in each location. UMass explained that the same office schedules events in both locations, so the lift would always be located where needed.

The Committee thought it was acceptable to use portable lifts to gain access to the stages, but were uncertain of the assurances provided by UMass that the lift would not be needed in both locations at the same time. The committee voted unanimously (5-0)(GW move, IB second) to support the variance request if UMass would provide assurances that the lift would not be double booked.

OLD BUSINESS

Crocker Farm Elementary School Playground

The Committee reiterated the importance of sending a memorandum to the principal, school committee and Select Board explaining the lack of accessibility in the new playground and issues with the HP parking:

- The ramps to the play area
- The groundcover in the play area
- Accessible play equipment
- HP parking-signs and location (especially in location to the bus stop)

It was also suggested that the memorandum ask those interested to attend a DAAC meeting to learn more about the details.

Update to the Town's Transition Plan

The Committee discussed the best approach to begin the update process. It was agreed that the Human Resources Director would attend a future meeting to discuss the process used to generate the current plan. The Committee also agreed that any correspondence to departments within Town government need to be sent in a formal letter from the Town Manager—this would help ensure a response.

Materials Distributed at Meeting (available upon request in the Planning Department at Town Hall)

Agenda
December 14, 2010 Meeting Minutes
Aerial Map of UMass Fine Arts Center
Map of Community Field showing concept of walkway and parking improvements

Next Meeting(s)

February 8, 2011 at 11:30 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:58 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Nathaniel Malloy, staff liaison